



Dutch Uncle (Hard Case Crime #12)

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This crime chuckler wears its Elmore Leonard influence on its cover: "Dutch" is Leonard's nickname. The Dutch uncle in the book is an actual Dutchman whose cocaine and untimely demise set a small swarm of crooks and cops in motion. Harry Healy is the sort-of hero, a likable, small-time criminal, just out of jail, who has a hard time making good decisions. But he's just one player in a memorably quirky cast that includes a dim ex-jock snorting his way through his inheritance; a ditzy babe whose constant nakedness is annoying everyone; a short, chunky detective who struggles with his sensitivity training; and the braces-wearing Latina colleague he might just be made for. Pavia, coauthor of *The Other Hollywood*, an "oral history" of the porn industry, redraws the hard-boiled boundaries of the Hard Case Crime line a bit to include this offbeat diversion in the style of Leonard, Carl Hiaasen, and Charles Willeford's *Hoke Moseley* books

Dutch Uncle (Hard Case Crime #12) Details

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Author : Peter Pavia

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From Reader Review Dutch Uncle (Hard Case Crime #12) for online ebook

Mikel says

in the world of noir, this fails to really register.

Dave says

Florida is a frequent locale for crime stories, but the fact that Pavia uses Florida as his locale doesn't mean he's a copycat. This tale stands on its own merit. It takes the reader to a more recent world of Miami Beach, a world of endless beaches and wannabe models looking for an agent to set them up, a world of parolees who can't land a real job, a world of cocaine dealers and addicts, a world of ripoffs and backstabbers, and Barroom brawls, and the pounding beat coming from dozens of nightclubs.

This book, Dutch Uncle, is the real deal. Harry came down to Florida with a seemingly rich girlfriend who he never hears from again after a bar brawl lands him six months in County. Upon getting out, he thinks about playing it straight but he needs the cash a few quick deliveries for the Dutch Uncle, Manfred, can pay off. Harry didn't bargain on getting caught up in murder. Leo set him up with this deal but Leo has his hands full with Vicki who doesn't like to wear clothes and never leaves the house and two good old boys he sends to do his dirty work. As the body count grows, the police start focusing on Harry and Leo. Detective Martinson is a character in his own right and Lili Acevedo is like Angie Dickinson returning as Jennifer Lopez in tight beige suits. Pavia gets the cool beat of Miami Beach just right. Terrific reading and truly a worthwhile addition to the Hard Case Crime series.

Peter Rowe says

There's a few Hard Case Crime books that are out of print. If you're lucky you can pick 'em for a few pence from Amazon dealers. Got this one for 1p plus postage. It's a pretty beat up ex-library copy from Highland Park, Illinois.

Anyhow, there's probably a reason some of these books have gone out of print, maybe licensing issues, or perhaps they're just not the best. This was readable but not so good. It seemed there were just too many characters for its 250 pages and the central murder feels like a non-event. I was finding myself having to backtrack to work out who was who.

Could have been a decent slice-of-life but was unfocused and cluttered.

Nathan says

A crime is committed and the story follows three paths from it: the cops, the crooks and the man thought to have done it. As you expect, there is overlap between the threads but they don't really come together in a tidy way. Clearly the intention, but it felt a little bit lacking. Writing style is fine and workmanlike without being

flashy. Not as exciting as the cover blurb would suggest. Rated MA for violence, coarse language, nudity and drug use. 3/5

Kemper says

“The only reason to visit Florida is to identify your daughter’s dead body. That is it...The state flag of Florida should be a coroner holding up a sheet and then two parents screaming. Then there’s a flamingo in the bottom right hand corner with sunglasses going ‘YEAH’. And in Latin it says ‘Why did she go into porn?!?’”

- Patton Oswalt

Tragedy Plus Comedy Equals Time

Florida has provided an entire sub-genre of mysteries with crime writers like John D. MacDonald, Elmore Leonard, Carl Hiaasen and Tim Dorsey often portraying the state as teeming with colorful psychotic lowlifes perpetrating crimes. You can add *Dutch Uncle* to that list of books that won't do much to boost tourism to Miami.

Harry Healy is a petty criminal just out of jail and down to his last few bucks when he bumps into Leo, a guy he shared a cell with for a weekend. Leo tells Harry that he can make some money by doing a drug delivery for Manfred Pfiser who is generally known as the Dutch Uncle because....Well, he's Dutch. Duh!

This was generally well-written, but it definitely feels like a poor man's Elmore Leonard. It's entertaining but doesn't do anything to make it stand out from the many other Florida crime books out there.

Robert says

So I'm sorry to say DUTCH UNCLE really wasn't all that memorable (the way a Camry isn't really all that memorable after you've been staring at Lamborghinis all day and getting more than an eyeful). Like the Camry in a lot filled with Lamborghinis, this book seemed to have potential, a voice, and displayed brief inklings of success. But I was lost in a sea of characters who didn't really feel all that different from one another and backstory that proved jarring at times. Instead of whispering back and forth between the present and the past, I felt like I was in a boat and about to be tipped over.

Like any good hard-boiled tale, the men packed more than a few punches, and the violence bubbled up to the surface. As for the women, they actually seemed to have a bit of sass and strength, and it proved to be a rather pleasant surprise. And it made my ensuing disappointment all the worse, as I found myself forgetting passages and entire chapters as soon as I had finished them. Had I not enjoyed all the other Hard Case Crime novels, I might have given up on this one sooner, and just cut my losses, even as I kept waiting for potential to mirror up with reality. In the end, it just didn't quite seem to pan out.

Dan Schwent says

Three days out of jail, Harry Healy gets talked into making a cocaine delivery. The delivery goes south and

when Harry goes back to the guy he was working for, he finds him dead, a bullet wound to the head. Worse yet, Harry's a suspect. Can Harry escape from the law or will he wind up just like his **Dutch Uncle?**

I'm not really sure what to think about this one. On one hand, I enjoyed the three separate threads; the cops investigating Manfred's murder, Harry trying to forget about the law nipping at his heels, and the killers enjoying their ill-gotten gains. There were some good twists. On the other hand, the threads didn't converge that well and at least fifteen pages felt like filler. Also, the subplot about Harry and the waitress felt tacked on.

While it was an exciting read at times, Dutch Uncle is strictly middle of the road as far as Hard Case Crime is concerned.

Michael W. says

I picked this up after attending a reading by the writer, Peter Pavia, who was very entertaining, at [<http://www.freebirdbooks.com>] in Brooklyn.

This book is published by a fairly small and independant publisher, [<http://www.hardcasecrime.com>], that is re-publishing classic novels of the 'pulp fiction' genre, and publishing new works by writers of what I would describe as 'neo-pulp fiction'.

I love the writing style and language of this novel. Pavia does an incredible job of updating the pulp style to the modern day while delivering a great driving plot centered around Harry Healy, a small-time hood and part-time thug, who's finally admitting that he really does have a heart of gold and decides to turn his life around. But is too late?!?! You have to read it to find out...

Craig Childs says

I dug deep into the Hard Case Crime backlog for some seaside reading in Malta this weekend.

I don't know if the title is an intentional homage to Elmore "Dutch" Leonard, but I suspect it must be because this novel seems to have been crafted in his image. Pavia captures the essence of Leonard's streetwise dialogue, a blend of slang and bluff from the mouths of characters who are never as smart as they think they are.

This book also provides that same feeling to the readers that we have been dropped into the middle of an ongoing story that began years before the first chapter and will probably not end in the likely places.

Harry is three days out of jail when he decides to score some quick cash by doing a cocaine delivery. The deal goes south, then he discovers the middle man who gave him the drugs has been murdered. He goes on the lam figuring the cops are sure to finger him as the shooter...

Leo has two deadbeat associates living in his house who are the actual killers. They were only supposed to rob the middle man but one of them got an itchy trigger finger. Now Leo has the cartel mad at him and may have to take drastic measures to save his life...

Arnie Martinson is the tired, cynical homicide detective who caught this crap case. Between the department-mandated sensitivity training and his super-ambitious boss, Arnie just wants to find the perp quick...

The narrative is less akin to a structured three-act arc as much as a *cinéma vérité* documentary following day-to-day lives of smarmy, desperate, cocaine-fueled criminals.

I enjoyed the sarcastic humor:

“Leo felt sorry for Alex. He felt sorry for Alex’s mom, for his sister, and for the uncle. On the other hand, the hand that counted, he didn’t have to worry any more about Alex blabbing to the cops.”

“The sidewalks were clogged with noisy Italians, Germans with seven-figure Swiss bank accounts, and blonde bunnies who seemed like they’d been raised in Midwestern towns but were too frail to be farm girls. Hip-hugging corduroys showcase their narrow figures, exhibiting brown bellies and pierced navels. Every fifty feet or so, one would uncork a mind-bending whinny, and throw her arms around another girl who looked just like her and happened to be approaching from the opposite direction:

However, Pavia cannot match Leonard’s ability to keep a plot moving at a consistent pace. At one point, although I was caught up in the story and the characters, I realized nothing of substance had actually happened for at least 80 pages.

Despite this single flaw, this was a more-than-solid debut novel. The ending had a nice balance of action, a twist or two I did not see coming, and one genuine moment of real character growth that gave the book emotional resonance (something Leonard did not always achieve). I would definitely read another from Peter Pavia.

Westley says

Mediocre entry in the Hard Case Crime series. Small-time crook Harry Healy gets framed for a murder. The book focuses on various characters - including the crooks and the police trying to solve the case. Ends up too scattered and nothing special for the crime noir genre.

Michael Moreci says

I'm a fan of the Hard Case Crime series, a fan of noir/crime fiction in general. But this didn't have much going for it--it lacked a strong central character, and could have been much, much shorter. Pavia wants to be Elmore Leonard--an admirable ambition--but doesn't get the unique characterizations down the way Leonard does.

Chris says

A fun crime novel with some surprising twists from what you expect (not with any sort of mystery, because the reader already knows about that side of it from the start, but with the results) and some decent characterization. The ending tricked me into being really angry for a minute before revealing a little fake-out

maneuver, so I'll give it a little extra credit for originality.

James W. Powell says

I enjoyed the overall story in DUTCH UNCLE, but unfortunately, the changing POVs in each chapter was a real turn off. Sure, switching POVs helped move the story along, but it created a disconnect for me because there was no real main character to pull for. That alone wouldn't have been a major problem, but Pavia adds lots of (unimportant) details about the past of each character, thus adding unnecessary asides that halted the flow of an otherwise interesting tale.

John says

Unexpectedly epic.

Joseph says

GENIUS! Great read, engaging characters, and entertaining story. 4 thumbs up!
